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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 LAGOS 001080

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STATE FOR AF/W
STATE FOR INR/AA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/24/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: POLITICAL VIEWS, SURPRISING OFFER FROM DELTA
GOVERNOR IBORI

* Missing Section 001 *

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unpopular within the South-South and even in Rivers State.

DELTA STATE DEVELOPMENT

¶9. (C) When asked about Delta State's development activities, Ibori described a program featuring his recently-approved Warri bridge project (actually one large bridge and twenty-five smaller bridges.) The project has the dual benefit of producing much-needed employment and developing needed infrastructure. Ibori stressed the Warri bridge program price tag, claiming it will cost roughly 25 billion naira (approximately 195 million USD), a very large portion of the budget available for infrastructure development.

¶10. (C) Claiming to run a transparent administration, Ibori also admitted his government could do more and be more efficient. He then stated he would like USG technical assistance in helping Delta improve fiscal discipline and to better channel funds to sustainable development projects, particularly in the Warri area. He made a similar plea before the local media the following morning.

COMMENT

¶11. (C) Although not opting for higher office, Ibori will be an important player in 2007. He has an ample war chest that will help any candidate he decides to endorse. For now that candidate is Atiku. However, Ibori is most interested in his post-2007. He wants a quiet life where he can enjoy his vast fortune. To get to that quiet life, he must continue to walk that tightrope between President Obasanjo and VP Atiku, and therefore he is hedging his support for Atiku by planning on staying in the PDP. Thus, should Atiku sink, Ibori will not drown with him. Should Atiku rise, then

Ibori will reap the dividends of his surreptitious but significant support to Atiku. Managing this balance will take a lot of acumen. Ibori has the skill but his situation also shines a clear light on the cynical dimensions Nigeria's electoral politics have already attained. We will consider the possibility of taking-up the Governor on his unprecedented offer to review the Delta State books and lend technical assistance to the state's development efforts. Delta State is a strategic state. The creeks around the city of Warri are home to FNDIC, the Ijaw militant group that damaged Shell facilities earlier this year causing Shell to lose 500,000 bpd of oil. During the 2003 election season, that same group turned Warri into chaos and damaged Chevron's Escravos facilities. The more we can push Ibori to target the Warri area for some short-term development assistance, the more we can stand a chance of preventing a repeat of the destruction the Ijaw militants have caused to oil facilities in Delta State. End comment.

BROWNE